

Common idling myths and facts:

MYTH: The engine needs to be warmed up before driving.

FACT: In South Carolina's climate, most engines do not require warming up. In colder weather, excessive idling can be damaging to the engine. It is best to "warm up" for no more than 30 seconds (3-5 minutes for buses) and drive slowly for the first few minutes.

MYTH: Idling is good for the engine.

FACT: Idling for extended periods can be harder on your engine than restarting and cause excessive wear.

MYTH: Idling is better than restarting the engine.

FACT: With today's vehicles, you will save fuel by turning off your engine if you expect to wait longer than 30 seconds (3-5 minutes for buses), and restarting when you're ready to go again. Idling wastes fuel and produces more air pollution than restarting.

MYTH: If you can't see or smell emissions coming out vehicle tailpipes, there are none.

FACT: Most air pollution is invisible and odorless, so just because you can't see or smell emissions coming out the tailpipes, it is still there.

Don't be caught idling. Take action!

- Limit warm-up idling to 30 seconds, even in cold weather.
- Turn off your engine if you expect to be stopped for more than 30 seconds (except in traffic).
- Avoid drive-through windows (banks, pharmacies and fast-food restaurants). Park and go inside.
- Carpool, walk, bike or take the bus whenever possible.
- Save gas by obeying the speed limit, accelerating gradually, and keeping your car tuned up.
- Refuel during the cooler evening hours, and do not "top off" the tank.

SPARE THE AIR

south carolina

Want to learn more about Breathe Better?

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Bureau of Air Quality staff can:

- help develop a plan and timeline for your school;
- train your "champions" and students, and offer suggestions for educating the school community;
- assist with overcoming obstacles to policy implementation;
- provide promotional items such as bookmarks, pencils, etc. (when available);
- provide signs for the bus, car and delivery lanes; and
- suggest additional projects to further improve air quality around your school.

For more information, contact:

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CR-009786 4/2010

BREATHE BETTER

anti-idling campaign

Turn the key. Be idle-free!



BREATHE BETTER

Why is idling your vehicle a problem?

Mobile sources such as cars, school buses and delivery trucks are major sources of air pollution in South Carolina. A vehicle is idling when it is parked or standing, with the engine running. **Idling** wastes about a half gallon of fuel per hour and releases many pollutants that can harm human health and the environment.

Idling = 0 miles per gallon

Children are more sensitive to air pollution than adults because they breathe more (relative to body size) and their lungs are still developing. Pollution from vehicle exhaust has been linked to asthma and other respiratory diseases, and increased risk of long-term health effects. **Asthma** in particular affects about 90,000 children in South Carolina and is a major cause of school absences and hospitalizations. Reducing idling time, especially on school campuses, helps to protect children unnecessary emissions that could harm their health.

What is Breathe Better?

Breathe Better is an anti-idling/clean air campaign. The goal is to protect the health of children by reducing harmful vehicle emissions around school campuses. **Students are taking actions** such as: educating drivers about idling; posting “no idling” signs around the school campus; and other school projects aimed at improving air quality, such as planting trees and encouraging alternative modes of transportation.



In the spotlight: York County campaign

On November 30th, 2009, York County held a rally to kickoff a Breathe Better campaign for all four local school districts. York County has over 50 schools, and the goal is to involve all of them over the next few years. The bus drivers in all four districts are also getting on board. Signs, t-shirts, and other promotional items for this campaign were sponsored by the Catawba Regional Council of Governments. The County recycling coordinator, City of Rock Hill, and Culture and Heritage Museums also coordinated and supported the effort.

Contact us about starting or supporting a Breathe Better campaign in your county or school district.

How can my school get started with Breathe Better?

The following steps will help you get started!

- Introduce the idea to administration, faculty, staff and/or parents.
- Meet with a Breathe Better representative to develop a plan and set a timeline.
- Identify faculty and/or parents to “champion” the program and form a student “Clean Air Patrol.”
- Educate parents and bus drivers about anti-idling policy (e.g., school newsletter, fliers, student presentations, etc.) and encourage their participation.
- Conduct simple data collection to monitor progress.
- Add a “no idling” policy statement and Breathe Better logo to the student/parent handbook and/or the school Web site.
- Post “no idling” signs (provided at no charge) on campus as a reminder to drivers.
- Consider other projects that will further improve air quality at your school!